

6A:9-3.3 Professional Standards for Teachers

(a) Teacher preparation, district induction, and professional development programs shall align their learning opportunities with the following standards:

1. Standard One: Subject Matter Knowledge. Teachers shall understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, structures of the discipline, especially as they relate to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), and design developmentally appropriate learning experiences making the subject matter accessible and meaningful to all students.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) In-depth the subject matter they plan to teach and the relationship of that discipline to other content areas;

(2) The evolving nature of the discipline or subject matter knowledge and the need for keeping abreast of new ideas and understanding of the discipline;

(3) That literacy skills and processes are applicable in all content areas and help students to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions that enable them to construct meaning and make sense of the world through reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing; and

(4) Concepts inherent in numeracy to enable students to represent physical events, work with data, reason, communicate mathematically, and make connections within their respective content areas in order to solve problems.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) Appreciating multiple perspectives and conveying to learners how knowledge is developed from the vantage point of the knower; and

(2) Enthusiasm for the discipline(s) they teach and in making connections to every day life.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Promote the development of critical and creative thinking, problem solving and decision making skills by engaging students in formulating and testing hypotheses according to the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence within the discipline;

(2) Make effective use of multiple representations and explanations of disciplinary concepts that capture key ideas and link them to students' prior understanding; and

(3) Evaluate teaching resources and curriculum materials for their completeness, accuracy and usefulness for representing particular ideas and concepts.

2. Standard Two: Human Growth and Development. Teachers shall understand how children and adolescents develop and learn in a variety of school, family and community contexts and provide opportunities that support their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) How students construct knowledge, acquire skills and develop habits of mind and how to use instructional strategies that promote student learning;

(2) How student learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values; and

(3) How to identify and teach to the developmental abilities of students, which may include learning differences, visual and perceptual differences, cultural and socio-emotional differences, special physical or emotional challenges and gifted and talented exceptionalities.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) The educability of all children and adolescents;

(2) The belief that all children and adolescents bring talents and strengths to learning;

(3) Appreciation for multiple ways of knowing;

(4) The diverse talents of all students and to helping them develop self-confidence and subject matter competence; and

(5) The belief that all children and adolescents can learn at high levels and achieve success.

iii. Teachers apply learning theory to accommodate differences in student intelligence, perception, cognitive style and achievement levels.

3. Standard Three: Diverse Learners: Teachers shall understand the practice of culturally responsive teaching.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) How a person's world view is profoundly shaped by his or her life experiences, as mediated by factors such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age and special needs;

(2) The supports for and barriers to culturally responsive teaching in school environments; and

(3) The process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) Respect for individual and cultural differences, and appreciation of the basic worth of each individual and cultural group; and

(2) The diversity of learning that takes place in the classroom, respect for the talents and perspectives of each student and sensitivity to community and cultural norms.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Create a learning community in which individual differences are respected;

(2) Learn about the diverse students they teach, and the students' families and communities;

(3) Use strategies to support the learning of students whose first language is not English; and

(4) Use knowledge of students and their lives to design and carry out instruction that builds on students' strengths while meeting their needs and taking into account issues of social class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age and special needs.

4. Standard Four: Instructional Planning and Strategies. Teachers shall understand instructional planning, design long and short term plans based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, community, and curriculum goals, and shall employ a variety of developmentally appropriate strategies in order to promote critical thinking, problem solving and the performance skills of all learners.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) How to plan instruction based on students' needs, developmental progress and prior knowledge;

(2) Available and appropriate resources and materials for instructional planning;

(3) Techniques for modifying instructional methods, materials and the environment to help all students learn; and

(4) A variety of instructional approaches and the use of various technologies, to promote thinking and understanding.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to the development of students' critical thinking, independent problem solving and performance capabilities.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Identify and design instruction appropriate to students' stage of development, learning styles, strengths and needs;

(2) Plan instruction based on knowledge of classroom, school and community culture;

(3) Evaluate teaching resources and curriculum materials for their comprehensiveness, accuracy and usefulness for representing particular ideas and concepts;

(4) Identify strategies to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful for students, address a variety of learning styles, encourage students to pursue their own interests and inquiries and help students connect their learning to personal goals;

(5) Plan and develop effective lessons by organizing instructional activities and materials, incorporating a wide range of community and technology resources, to promote achievement of lesson objectives;

(6) Use formal and informal methods of assessment, information about students, pedagogical knowledge, and research as sources for active reflection, evaluation and revision of practice; and

(7) Create interdisciplinary learning experiences that allow students to integrate knowledge, skills and methods of inquiry from several subject areas.

5. Standard Five: Assessment. Teachers shall understand and use multiple assessment strategies and interpret results to evaluate and promote student learning and to modify instruction in order to foster the continuous development of students.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) The characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of different types of assessments (for example, criterion-referenced and norm-referenced instruments, traditional standardized and performance-based tests, observation systems and assessments of student work) for evaluating how students learn, what they know and are able to do, and what kinds of experiences will support their further growth and development; and

(2) Measurement theory and assessment-related issues, such as validity, reliability, bias and scoring concerns.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to the belief that students' strengths are the basis for growth and their errors are opportunities for learning.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Analyze student performance using multiple sources of data, and to modify future plans and instructional techniques that promote desired student learning outcomes;

(2) Provide students with constructive feedback on their learning and encourage their use of data and self-assessment strategies to monitor their progress toward personal goals;

(3) Accurately document and report assessment data and ongoing student data to parents and professional staff; and

(4) Enhance their knowledge of learners and evaluate students' progress and performance using a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to modify teaching and learning strategies.

6. Standard Six: Learning Environment. Teachers shall understand individual and group motivation and behavior and shall create a supportive, safe and respectful learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) The principles and strategies of effective classroom management that promote positive relationships, cooperation and purposeful learning activities in the classroom;

(2) How the classroom environment influences learning and promotes positive behavior for all students; and

(3) How classroom participation supports student commitment.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) The role of students in promoting each other's learning and recognize the importance of peer relationships in creating a climate of learning;

(2) Taking responsibility for establishing a positive climate in the classroom and participation in maintaining such a climate in the school as a whole; and

(3) The expression and use of democratic values in the classroom.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

- (1) Maintain a learning community in which students assume responsibility for themselves and one another, participate in decision making and work collaboratively and independently;
- (2) Create a safe and secure classroom climate for all students, by practicing effective listening and group facilitation skills;
- (3) Create a positive classroom climate which is socially, emotionally and physically safe;
- (4) Establish and maintain appropriate standards of behavior;
- (5) Use instructional time effectively; and
- (6) Prepare students for and monitor independent and group work that allows for full and varied participation of all individuals.

7. Standard Seven: Special Needs. Teachers shall adapt and modify instruction to accommodate the special learning needs of all students.

i. Teachers know and understand:

- (1) How to access information regarding applicable laws, rules, regulations and procedural safeguards regarding planning and implementing the individual education program; and
- (2) Available resources related to educational strategies to accommodate individual differences and to employ positive behavioral intervention techniques to students with special needs.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to the belief that children and adolescents with special needs can learn at high levels and achieve success.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

- (1) Apply knowledge of students' abilities/disabilities, experiences, talents and prior learning as well as language, culture, economics, family and community values to positively impact student learning;
- (2) Employ appropriate diagnostic measures and interpret the results to implement strategies that influence learning;
- (3) Participate in the design and implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP), where appropriate;

(4) Meet the needs of all learners by using a wide range of teaching techniques to accommodate and modify strategies, services and resources, including technology; and

(5) Make appropriate provisions, in terms of time and circumstances for work, task assigned, communication and response modes, for individual students who have particular learning differences or needs.

8. Standard Eight: Communication. Teachers shall use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and written communication techniques and the tools of information literacy to foster the use of inquiry, collaboration and supportive interactions.

i. Teachers know and understand the power of communication in the teaching and learning process.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) Appreciating the cultural dimension of communication, responding appropriately and seeking to foster culturally sensitive communication by and among all students in the class; and

(2) Being a thoughtful and responsive listener.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Communicate clearly in English, using precise language and appropriate oral and written expressions;

(2) Assist students individually or as a member of a group to access, evaluate, synthesize and use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose;

(3) Use effective verbal and nonverbal techniques which foster individual and collective inquiry;

(4) Model effective communication strategies and questioning techniques in conveying ideas and stimulating critical thinking; and

(5) Communicate in a variety of ways that demonstrate a sensitivity to cultural, linguistic, gender and social differences.

9. Standard Nine: Collaboration and Partnerships. Teachers shall build relationships with parents, guardians, families and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

i. Teachers know and understand:

(1) The importance of meaningful parent/family involvement in education in addressing the unique student needs and the perspectives to be gained from effective school/home interactions that contributes to high quality teaching and learning;

(2) The role of the school within the community and how to utilize diverse partnerships to contribute to student learning and development; and

(3) How to collaborate with all stakeholders regarding decision-making and the well-being of students while respecting student/family privacy and confidentiality.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

(1) Recognizing the role of parents, guardians and other family members as a child's primary teacher;

(2) Being concerned about all aspects of the student's well-being and working with parents/families to provide diverse opportunities for student success; and

(3) Being willing to work with parents/families and other professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

(1) Identify and utilize family and community resources to foster student learning and provide opportunities for parents to share skills and talents that enrich learning experiences;

(2) Establish respectful and productive relationships and to develop cooperative partnerships with diverse families, educators and others in the community in support of student learning and well-being; and

(3) Institute parent/family involvement practices that support meaningful communication, parenting skills, enriched student learning, volunteer and decision-making opportunities at school and collaboration to strengthen the teaching and learning environment of the school.

10. Standard Ten: Professional Development. Teachers shall participate as active, responsible members of the professional community, engaging in a wide range of reflective practices, pursuing opportunities to grow professionally and establishing collegial relationships to enhance the teaching and learning process.

i. Teachers know and understand how education research and other methods of inquiry can be used as a means for continuous learning, self assessment and development.

ii. Teachers value and are committed to:

- (1) Refining practices that address the needs of all students and the school community;
- (2) Professional reflection, assessment and learning as an ongoing process; and
- (3) Collaboration with colleagues to give and receive help.

iii. Teachers engage in activities to:

- (1) Use reflective practice and the Professional Development Standards to set goals for their professional development plans;
- (2) Learn through professional education organizations; and
- (3) Make the entire school a productive learning climate through participation in collegial activities.